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A Snapshot of the Life of Howard Oedel by Ron Collins

Everyone in Hebron knows our Master Storyteller, Howard Oedel, but to really appreciate this remarkable gentleman you need to hear more of his story.

Howard Tredennick Oedel was born on the 9th of July in 1921 in Boston the son of William Nagel Oedel and Nettie Erdine Tredennick.

When Howard entered Harvard, he moved into one of the student dorms and on first meeting his roommate was told, "Oedel we are joining the Navy."

"We are?" asked Howard.

"We are if we are going to get through this college," his roommate answered and down they went to the ROTC office.

The ROTC Commander told him "Oedel, you're too short to be a Naval Officer. Do you think you can grow a quarter of an inch in the next four years?"

"Yes, sir, I can," replied Howard. He didn't grow any more, but he did make it into the Navy.

So, Howard joined the Naval ROTC when a freshman at Harvard in 1939. This was the very same year J.F.K. graduated from Harvard. The day after graduation in May of 1943, he was married to Carolyn Howard Townsend, and 8 days later he was on the West coast awaiting transportation to his ship, the Battleship USS Massachusetts (Big Mamie, BB-59) situated with the U.S. Pacific Fleet in the Soloman Islands, upon which he would serve for two one-half years.

During the War Howard served as a Lieutenant JG aboard the USS Massachusetts, as a Dam-

age Control Officer and Berthing Officer, and on that vessel fought in the Battle of Leyte Gulf in the Philippines. The Battle of Leyte Gulf, also called the "Battles for Leyte Gulf", and formerly as the "Second Battle of the Philippine Sea," is generally considered to be the largest naval battle of World War II and also, by some criteria, the largest naval battle in history. It was fought in waters near the Philippine island of Leyte, from October 23 to 26, 1944, between naval and naval-air forces of the Allies and those of the Empire of Japan. It was during the battle for Leyte that the Kamikazes made their first appearance and caused significant damage to the US fleet.

When Japan surrendered in the summer of 1945, "Big Mamie" was one of the first ships home after the war. All told, Howard put in about 225,000 miles on board the USS Massachusetts. He received an honorable discharge from the Navy in January, 1946.

A most memorable experience of the war for Howard was going through a monstrous typhoon with 60 foot waves breaking green water over the bridge, 5 decks up! Three destroyers keeled over and sank, the USS Pittsburgh lost her bow and all of the flight decks on the carriers were broken off or badly damaged. This was the Navy's worst loss of the war.

Happy times were few and far between but Howard recalls putting in to Hawaii several times; where some on leave described it as "Heaven without women" and by someone else as "Hell, without women."

As stated above, Howard Oedel attended Harvard in 1939 and graduated from there in May

(Continued on page 2)

1943, after which he immediately went to war. While at Harvard, Howard also showed the humor by which he is known today in Hebron. In 1941 he played the humorous villain “Diccon” in the bawdy British play “Gammer Gurton’s Needle.” Diccon mischievously kept a quarrel going between Dame Gurton and Dame Chat, to his great humor. Here we have early evidence of those traits we see in Howard today, a twinkle of mischievous humor and an eye for the ladies.

After the war Howard received a Masters in teaching at Harvard and a PhD from Boston University. His dissertation was entitled, **Portsmouth, New Hampshire, The Role of the Provincial Capital in the Development of the Colony 1700-1775**. A copy can be read at the Portsmouth, New Hampshire Athenaeum Collection.

While working on his PhD, in January 1948, Howard and some friends climbed Mt Washington on skis. No easy feat, even with today’s high-tech winter gear and skis. For a number of years he skied on the Northern Presidential range during April vacations.

After World War II Howard and Carolyn lived briefly in Framingham, Mass. and in Littleton, N.H. where he taught at St. Mary’s in the Mountains, a girls private school (where long time local resident Nancy Mudge Sycamore was one of his students). They also lived in Acton and Concord, Massachusetts, when he taught at Concord Academy and later at Lesley College, Cambridge. In 1961 the Oedels moved to Cheshire Connecticut where Howard taught for 20 years at Southern Connecticut State University.

Howard and Carolyn brought two children into the world: William Townsend Oedel and Elyn Oedel, both of whom are educators.

Howard’s dad and Howard had skied Tenney Hill throughout the 1930’s. They took a ski train from Boston to Plymouth, then rode in an open truck to the Davis farm in Hebron where Mrs. Davis sold them donuts and coffee for ten cents. As they trudged up to the top of Tenney Hill they passed the Uriah Pike place built c1782. The old house had been used as a summer home and rented, as a winter hostelry, to the Harvard College ski team. In 1945, the property was bought

by William N. Oedel, Howard’s father. When his father retired in 1957, Howard took over the home, into which, upon his own retirement, he and Carolyn moved permanently in 1982. Today this house is where Howard tends to his asparagus beds, berry patches and flower gardens, the fruits of which he shares with friends and neighbors.

There are three major Americana antique events in the country—one of which is Antiques Week in New Hampshire in August. Nowhere else can you see as much Americana in a week as you can during New Hampshire Antiques Week. Enthusiasts come from all over the country to attend the various shows scheduled for this buying extravaganza. Scanning down packed show aisles, you might spot among the crowds some of New York’s most regaled designers, CEOs of blue-chip firms, and Hollywood celebrities. Tourism experts declare the week to be one of the ten major draws of the year in the Granite State.

(Without reservations, accommodations can be hard to find within a 50-mile radius of the epicenter of events, Manchester.) This major event evolved from a show started by Howard in 1957 as an adjunct to The New Hampshire Antiques Dealers Association (NHADA). The first show was held in August of 1957 in two small rooms at the New Hampshire Highway Hotel in Concord. It met annually at the Highway Hotel until its move several years ago to Manchester. The rest, as they say, is history. Of the original founders of NHADA, Howard is the only one still with us today.

For many years Howard has been an avid student of the life and times of Abraham Lincoln. For many years he taught a graduate, as well as, an under graduate course on the Civil War. He joined the Lincoln Group of Boston in 1952 and was the youngest member at that time. Today he is the oldest member.

Howard, along with Dick Merrill, Alan Barnard, Nancy Sycamore, Flora Braley, Donna Esty and Jane Ramsay started the Hebron Historical Society in 1982, and Howard served as President of the Society for a number of years. He continues on as a Director at Large for the Society and as a major contributor to its events.

Old Home Day By Barbara Brooks

The coming of Summer and our Summer visitors prompted me to explore the origins of "Old Home Day", or "Old Home Week" as it has sometimes been called.

Old Home Week was created by New Hampshire Governor Frank West Rollins. In 1897 he wrote: "I wish that in the ear of every son and daughter of New Hampshire, in the summer days, might be heard whispered the persuasive words: Come back, come back. Do you not hear the call? What has become of the old home where you were born? Do you not remember it — the old farm back among the hills, with its rambling buildings, its well sweep casting its long shadows, the row of stiff poplar trees, the lilacs and the willows?"

Rollins founded an Old Home Week Association and as Governor presided over the State's first homecoming in 1899.

By 1907 the idea of Old Home Week had expanded from New Hampshire to all of the New England states and others. Many towns in New

Hampshire continue the tradition of holding "Old Home Days".

Two of Hebron's citizens, Flora Braley and Norton Braley recalled much pleasure enjoyed by all of those who attended those long ago "Old Home Days". With a fence surrounding the Common, the area in front of the Church was used for ball games which were pretty much ongoing during most of the day.

Most families brought their own packed lunches or dinner which always contained home-made breads, pickles and delicious cakes. Baked beans were a must on the list of food offerings to bring and the bean pots were spread out in the basement of the church for all to help themselves to. The evening found celebrants dancing in the church basement with an orchestra consisting of four or five musicians.

Records indicate that the first Old Home Day was held in Hebron in 1919 and the last was held in 1994. A picture hangs in our library of the 1994 gathering on the Roger's property (now the Safety Building).

Parts of this story come from Walt Stockwell of the Campton Historical Society.

A continuation of this article will be published in the January Gazette...



Old Home Day Team

Correction: We inadvertently missed Mr. & Mrs. Warren Tripp, who are Life-Couple members of the Society, when we listed life members in January. We do apologize for this oversight.

Hebron History Word Search
How well do you know Hebron?

This puzzle contains 20 family names of early Hebron settlers. They are found in the rows going across or in the columns up & down (10 each way). Can you find them all? Use a crayon or highlighter to mark each one.

P	O	L	A	Z	N	F	U	T	F	A	C	D
I	E	W	I	S	E	G	H	F	E	K	J	I
K	L	R	M	N	P	O	B	S	R	T	E	Q
E	A	I	G	E	O	R	G	E	R	B	W	C
J	D	G	F	H	W	K	L	H	I	X	E	N
O	P	H	A	Z	E	L	T	O	N	R	L	S
T	Q	T	D	U	R	V	X	B	A	L	L	O
W	B	C	A	E	S	D	F	A	Z	G	Y	R
A	H	I	M	J	K	B	A	R	N	A	R	D
M	O	R	S	E	L	R	M	T	P	O	N	W
C	S	T	U	V	Q	A	W	Y	Z	R	X	A
C	F	B	A	R	T	L	E	T	T	K	M	Y
L	D	H	K	O	M	E	R	R	I	L	L	T
U	C	R	O	S	B	Y	L	N	O	P	D	B
R	T	U	V	Y	Z	A	D	E	F	G	B	C
E	A	B	R	S	X	W	R	O	G	E	R	S

Answers are found on page 5.

History of Newfound Lake Marina
By Doug McQuilkin

Water skiers, wake boarders, jet skiers, pontoon boaters and lots of people just having fun zipping around! However, widespread recreational power boating on Newfound Lake is a fairly recent development. Prior to World War II, local boating consisted mainly of small sailboats, rowboats and canoes while motorized craft were limited to a few inboard runabouts operated by lakeside homeowners, a few workboats and some open fishing boats with outboard motors. There were no dedicated

lakeside marine facilities other than one or two small rental operations in the Bristol area which catered to weekend fishermen and tourists. On-water activities were certainly less obvious (and noisy) in those days!

However, pleasure boating, and especially power boating, really began to grow as a popular summer leisure activity in the years immediately leading up to the war. Hebron's Wes Sanborn operated two vacation cottage rental locations at the north end of the lake, Sleepy Hollow in Sanborn Bay and, beginning in 1940, Journey's End at the mouth of the Cockermonth River. With Sleepy Hollow's ideal location on the calm shores of the small sheltered bay, he saw an opportunity in 1939 for a marina and powerboat rental business catering to his summer visitors. The marina's entire operation was based in a small white clapboard building that still exists today, tucked into a corner next to North Shore Road. Sanborn rented small rowboats with outboard motors to people staying at Sleepy Hollow as well as to non-resident day visitors and fishermen. He soon became a dealer for Evinrude outboard motors, repaired all brands of outboards, sold boating and fishing gear and provided fuel service. Unfortunately, WWII began shortly after the business was getting off the ground and all types of tourism, including summer vacationing, suffered a dramatic decline.

Fortunately, when the war finally ended in 1945, the national economy began an unprecedented expansion and brought with it jobs, increased leisure time and an enormous growth of summer tourism. It wasn't long before demand for marine equipment and services began to outgrow the limited space in Sanborn Bay. So in the mid-50s, Sanborn turned to his Journey's End property on the Cockermonth delta as the site for an expanded marina operation.

The river with its back bays and channels at the entrance to the lake provided an ideal sheltered location for a full-service marina with ample room for parking, a marine store, docking facilities, boat storage, fuel sales and a large workshop. Construction of The Newfound Lake Marina began in 1954 with the dredging of the main basin, the small channel leading to the river's mouth and the river channel out into the lake. Spoil from these dredging

operations was used to form the banks along the shore of the basin and entrance channel which are readily visible today. Approximately 40 docks on the basin's north shore, 60-70 pull-up sites on the south shore, a concrete launching ramp and the main marina building were all completed in 1955; two years later, the one-story "Butler Building" shop was erected. All of these facilities still exist.

When Sleepy Hollow was sold to the Duckworth family at the end of the 1950s, Sanborn's full-time attention turned to his marina operation. The business quickly grew to offer a complete complement of boating services including maintenance and repairs, winter storage, boat rentals and fuel. He also provided the convenience of issuing fishing licenses on site! The addition of dealerships for Penn Yan, Mirrorcraft and Glastron powerboats and continued sales of Evinrude outboard motors further expanded the operation. Although primarily catering to power boaters, a fair number of sailboats also used the Newfound Lake Marina as their homeport. During the next 15 years, business boomed.

In the late 60s, Sanborn decided to retire from the marina business and began looking for a hard-working, reliable new owner. Finally in 1969, Newfound Lake Marina was sold to longtime summer residents, Dick and Joyce Cowern. Included in the purchase were all of the properties west of the marina channel to the Cockermonth River in addition to the Journey's End Lodge on North Shore Road; the rest of Journey's End was sold in 1972 to the Jackson family. Meanwhile, the Cowerns embarked on a major marina expansion program, adding the large boat storage building by the marina entrance (with its prominent sign) in 1970 and three multi-story rack storage sheds behind it during the next several years. They also added dealerships for Boston Whaler boats, Old Town canoes and Tohatsu outboard motors. A picnic area under the huge pine trees on the south shore of the basin was created at about the same time and became a very popular amenity with boating families on summer weekends. The Cowerns converted the Journey's End Lodge from a house with small individual apartments into their permanent residence. Later on, Joyce's parents, Jack and Lily Allen, built the small house between the lodge and the marina. Un-

der the ownership of the Cowern family, Newfound Lake Marina continued to prosper. Along with the continuing national growth in income and leisure time, Newfound Lake experienced a boom in housing construction. A surge in area condominium construction added significantly to the lake's summer population as well. Of course, many of these visitors wanted access to boats and marina facilities, and the Cowerns were happy to oblige

After nearly two decades of long seven-day work weeks, and often 16 hour days during the busy summer months, the Cowerns decided to "call it a career". One of their employees, Bill Robertie of Hebron, had earlier expressed an interest in purchasing the business so in the middle of 1986, Newfound Lake Marina was sold to its third owner. Robertie added a new rack storage building on the south bank of the basin. Additional equipment was purchased to accommodate the expanding demand for both storage and docking space. Initially, the business continued to grow and profit. However, financial pressures brought on by the economic recessions of the 90s led to the first financial downturn in the marina's history. Robertie's efforts at consolidating the marina operation to the immediate 5 acres occupied by the buildings couldn't overcome the long-term decline in revenues and the increasing costs of labor, taxes and other expenses. Competition from the West Shore Marina in Bristol also affected the marina's business. The financial deterioration continued until 2004 when the business was forced into bankruptcy. A final five year effort to restructure the operation to a member-owned marina club ultimately failed and, in June of 2009, the Newfound Lake Marina was turned over to its primary creditor, Sumac Corporation. Although the demand for full-service marine facilities at the north end of the lake still exists, and will likely expand in the coming years, the future of the Newfound Lake Marina is currently very much in doubt.

Ferrin	Morse	
Crosby	Merrill	Wright
Brale	McClure	Wise
Bartlett	Jewell	Rogers
Barnard	Hobart	Powers
Ball	Hazelton	Pike
Adams	George	Orday
Hebron History Word Search Answers		



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**Pot Luck Supper and Annual Meeting with presentation on
September 12: "The Early Settlers of Hebron " by Ron Collins**

**Veteran's Day Ceremony - Wednesday November 11 at 10:45 on
the Common**

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DUES DUE EACH JANUARY

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Barbara Brooks, Membership Chair.

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